DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 671 EA 024 604

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TITLE Mentoring for Administrator Renewal. Occasional Papers: School Leadership and Education Reform. OP #1.
INSTITUTION National Center for School Leadership, Urbana, IL.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE [91]
CONTRACT R117C80003
NOTE 32p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center for School Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1208 W. Springfield Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801 ($4).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; Interprofessional Relationship; *Leadership Styles; *Management Development; *Mentors; *Professional Development; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois

ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the effects of a statewide mentoring program for Illinois principals are presented in this paper, with a focus on the reasons for principals' behavior changes. Methodology involved interviews with six pairs of mentors and proteges, site observations, and artifact collection. Conclusions are that: (1) principals respond to a personalized midcareer renewal; (2) principal development should be an individualized process that emphasizes issues of identity and adaptivity; (3) mentoring is an interpersonal relationship based on mutual respect and trust; (4) every principal changed to some degree from directive to shared decision-making leadership styles; (5) planned project mentoring can have an important role in principals' professional growth but must be implemented with care; and (6) the principals' midcareer crisis problem has been overlooked. Three tables and a 45-item bibliography are included. (LMI)

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ED353671

Occasional Papers:

School Leadership and Education Reform

OP #1

Mentoring for Administrator Renewal

by Dianne Ashby

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The Center is funded by a grant from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Grant No. R117C80003). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the National Center and authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting agency.

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MENTORING FOR ADMINISTRATOR RENEWAL

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Mentoring For Administrator Renewal

by

Dianne E. Ashby

Introduction

Since the 1960's, the roles in which school administrators are engaged have become increasingly varied and complex. Consequently, school leadership has been the subject of hundreds of studies in which the principal has been variously described as building manager, administrator, politician, change agent, boundary spanner and instructional leader (Andrews, 1988).

Early research on school leadership described the principal as a supporter, coordinator and initiator who worked through teachers (Brieve, 1972). The role of the principal as instructional leader gained special attention through research linking leadership to student achievement (Brookover, 1979; Edmonds, 1978; Marcus, 1976; Weber, 1971; Wellisch, 1978). Research based on effective schools studies by Brookover and Edmonds identified a long list of behaviors that have relevance to the instructional leadership role. Within this large set of behaviors, 5 broad categories can be used to identify core leadership activities: defines mission, manages curriculum, supervises teachers, monitors student progress, and promotes school climate (Hallinger, 1983 & 1985; Krug, 1990; Monograph #2, 1986).

School administrators consistently report that the university education they received as graduate students did not adequately prepare them for this new role and the demands it places on them (Bridges, 1977; Murphy & Hallinger, 1987). In addition, schools have invested few resources in the continuing professional development of principals (Kranyik & Edgar, 1987). This results in "early on-the-job retirement," of professionals who have lost their commitment and so ceased to function as leaders (Kranyik & Edgar, 1987; see also Gould, 1976; Hall & Kram, 1981; Schein, 1978). In order to lead changing schools, administrators need to reconceive their leadership role. Reconceptualization of role requires real and important opportunities for the exercise of new approaches to school leadership (National Leadership Network, 1991).

Mentoring establishes a personal relationship for the purpose of professional development. Research has identified three types of mentoring: life mentoring, informal career

mentoring, and project mentoring (Clawson, 1980; Gray, 1988; Kanter, 1977; Krug, 1988; Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976). The most important attribute of an effective mentor has been identified as skill in interpersonal relations, rather than position or power (Kram, 1983; Olian et al., 1988; Sullivan & Midlas, 1985; Wilbur, 1987). Successful mentor-protege relationship in the work place have been linked to the career successes of the proteges (Wilber, 1987). However, most studies have identified psychosocial benefits to both the protege and mentor as more immediate and important to the participants than potential long-term career advancement (George, 1990; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Krupp, 1985; Noe, 1988). These psychosocial benefits tend to disappear over time if they are not frequently reinforced (Barnett & Mueller, 1989; Krug, 1990).

Most literature about mentoring in education focuses on mentoring of teachers during their first year of teaching, as a means of retaining experienced teachers, and as a new strategy employed by local professional development programs (Little, 1990). Mentoring has been thrust to the forefront of educational staff development by educational policy makers and reformers despite the lack of empirical evidence of any benefits to participants in either the public or private sectors (Carden, 1990; Little, 1990). Experiments with mentoring of new administrators in the state of Ohio found implementation of mentoring programs to be more difficult than anticipated and resulted in several recommendations regarding planned mentoring projects: select mentors who are regarded as administrative role models; provide mentors with training about what they are supposed to accomplish; provide mentors with training on personal communication; match mentors with geographically accessible proteges; ensure that the organizations within which mentors and proteges work understand the participants' obligations to the program; and support informal continuation of the relationship after termination of the program (Clark & Zimmer, 1989; Daresch, 1988; see also Cohn, 1990).

The Illinois Administrators' Academy is the vehicle by which the State Board of Education provides continuing professional education to administrators of the public school system. A variety of programs are presented each year, including one day awareness activities and multi-session programs focusing on specific aspects of leadership. In 1988, the Academy introduced an individualized leadership development program in which administrators work one-on-one with an instructor (called a "leadership analyst") to assess their current leadership skills and to develop a plan to strengthen areas in which they perceive the need for improvement. The program has been enthusiastically received by both program participants and their instructors (Krug, Ahadi, & Scott, 1991). Independent evaluations

of the program have described it as one of the most effective among the programs offered by the Academy (Strand, 1991).

Soon after the program was introduced, it became apparent that certain extensions were required in order to ensure that participants would be able to realize fully the goals they had established in their development plans. Within a year, the IAA broadened the program to incorporate planned project mentoring as a device for helping participants work through their development plans.

The Illinois individualized development program was selected for study as a means of acquiring some understanding about mentoring as an approach to developing instructional leadership. Each client is a practicing administrator who works with a leadership analyst. The leadership analyst is trained in an assessment process consisting of the collection and analysis of data across five dimensions of instructional leadership (defines mission, manages curriculum, supervises teaching, monitors student progress, and promotes school climate). The leadership analyst and client principal examine the data collected through a series of instruments and on-site observations to determine changes the client wants to make regarding his or her leadership across the five dimensions. Data analysis culminates in the design of an individualized professional development plan. Implementation of the plan is assisted by a trained project mentor for a period of one year. In some cases, the leadership analyst is also trained to serve as a mentor and transitions into the role of mentor. In other cases, the leadership analyst discontinues involvement with the client once the plan is designed and a third person is introduced as the mentor.

The only statewide effort of this type, the Illinois program provides a unique opportunity to study mentor-protege relationships as an administrative development process. Developing an understanding of what occurs during planned project mentoring is important to future decisions regarding designs for continuing development programs for principals in Illinois and other states which might be tempted to replicate the model.

A study of principals in the Illinois Administrators' Academy individualized development program during 1990-91 examined changes in instructional leadership to determine whether mentors affected principals' behaviors. Principals reported changes in all behaviors associated with each of the five leadership dimensions (defines mission, manages curriculum, supervises teaching, monitors student progress, and promotes instructional climate), with the largest reported change associated with the dimension "defines mission"

(Clinical Strand Training of Trainers Manual, 1991). Though the study uncovered behavior changes across the group of nearly 100 subjects, the study did not explore reasons for the behavior changes.

The present research adopted a qualitative research paradign in order to explore in depth possible reasons for these behavior changes, in particular, and for the success of the program, in general.

Methods and Data Sources

Because not much was known about the ways in which mentors may have influenced the principals to change their behaviors, a sample of principals in this program and their mentors was studied further to find out what happens in these relationships. Structured interviews, followed by site observations and collection of artifacts, were the primary source of data. Interviews were tape recorded and supplemented by researcher notes and a written log of observations. Tape recordings were transcribed and reviewed by the subject principals and mentors for accuracy. Subjects were encouraged to edit or supplement the interview transcriptions so that they accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives regarding the mentoring program.

Six pairs of mentors and proteges were selected for interview. The pairs represented the variety of districts, geographic regions, ages, years of experience, and gender of the total pool of participating principals and their mentors. Mentors ranged from 42 to 62 years of age. Five were male and 1 was female. Proteges in the sample were all principals, though by the time of the interview one had been promoted to central office. Proteges ranged in age from 40 to 57 years old. Five were male and 2 were female.

Collection of data from the seven selected proteges and their mentors transpired in a manner similar to that labeled by Stenhouse (1978) as multi-site case study and "condensed field work," which relies heavily on tape recorded interviews. The "depth" interview was selected for its potential to foster a peer relationship between the research and each subject so that the subject would feel comfortable reflecting on the mentor-protege relationship and sharing both positive and negative aspects of the experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interview tapes, interview notes, and observation logs were transcribed so that each bit of data could be analyzed and categorized. The constant comparative method of data analysis (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

was utilized to process the data inductively. Transcript data were sorted into units of information which addressed either the research questions or unanticipated issues. Particular attention was paid to data which reflected similarities and differences among the relationships studied. Unites of data were reviewed and compared to establish categories of information that describe or explain the mentor protege relationships and the influence mentors had on the formation of those meanings. Data units which fit each category were grouped together, so that the usefulness of each category was established and its basic properties were defined. The same process was used to analyze researcher interview notes and observation logs. Protege development plans were compared with interview tapes to verify development goals and activities as described by proteges and mentors.

Results

Findings were grouped around seven major questions: 1) What kind of people become mentors? 2) What kind of principals volunteer to work with mentors? 3) How did mentors and principals establish their relationship? 4) Did principals change as a result of working with mentors? 5) How did mentors express their influence? 6) Would principals have changed without mentors? 7) What were the unanticipated outcomes of working with a mentor?

What kind of people become mentors? The six mentors in the study had significant experience as principals. Each of the mentors became a mentor as a natural progression from past experiences, formal and informal, as a supervisor, trainer, and mentor of principals. One mentor commented, "...that's been a role I've played for a number of years. That's fun, to see people grow... And, perhaps, it's only later in one's career that you have an opportunity to do that." The mentors also perceived mentoring as a means of enhancing their own professionalism.

> I'd been a high school principal, you know, for X years and after you do that so often it can become boring...So I thought that sounded interesting and intriguing ...Because I wanted to be in on the ground floor of it...I might make a difference to change it and it turned out it might make a difference to be involved in it.

> Originally, I made a decision for myself three or four years ago to start to get out from this building `cause I just saturate myself with the building, and this was my

> life and breath, and I was doing it professional reasons...I like what I read about it, and so it just peaked me, and it...came along at the right time, I guess.

What kind of principals volunteer to work with mentors? The principals who became proteges to mentors can be described as being at mid or late career. Although their experience as principals ranges from 4 - 24 years, their total experience as educators ranges from 10 - 35 years. Proteges came to the mentoring relationship looking for answers regarding their skills, perceptions, and careers. A protege said, "I was at a point in my career where I wanted to know....I never really had a good evaluation my perceptions about what I do well...is it true? I want to see if my perceptions were correct and accurate..." Another said simply, "I just really wanted to kind of be the best...that fantasy. Really, and if there was some way of somebody coming in and helping me improve, I just wanted to do that." A third talked about the risk associated with asking for help and the need to either do well in the current position or move on.

> I took a lot of guff from people when I said I'm acquiring someone to learn how to be a principal. And, they thought it was ridiculous...I said `I've by-gosh and by-gollied this so long that I'm not sure that I can make the change.' Because faculty members had decided things because I wasn't there to do it...and it was a readjustment that was had for them to accept me as someone who was not presuming to be the leader. I played with the idea of leaving, and I said, `No. I don't have the energy to do all this again somewhere else,' and I said, `If it's gonna happen, I want to do it here.'

How did mentors and principals establish their relationships? Five principals were provided an opportunity to chose a mentor from a list of trained candidates and were matched with the mentors they requested. They requested mentors with whom they had previously interacted or whom they knew by reputation to be exemplary school administrators. Two principals were not provided an opportunity to chose a mentor and were matched with an assigned mentor. One of these principals knew of the assigned mentor by reputation; the other did not. Mentors and proteges agreed that initially focusing on an improvement plan provided a basis for the natural evolution of a relationship which transcended the plan in importance and longevity.

Did principals change as a result of working with mentors? Six of the seven principals changed their perceptions of the principalship as a result of working with a project mentor.

Prior to participating in the mentor program, at least 6 of the 7 proteges appeared to doubt research which identified principals as the critical contributor to a school's effectiveness. The principals experienced new feelings of professionalism, adequacy, and pride in their positions. Proteges said things like: "I developed a lot of confidence in myself and what I was doing." "It made me feel more professional...I felt this is really a professional responsibility." And "I'm just now beginning to see the business of being a principal as something legitimate on its own, self-standing, necessary, and I never in my life felt it was a privilege or an opportunity as I do now." One protege responded that the experience of working with a mentor had not changed his definition of the principalship, but had provided him with the tools to implement his philosophy. Pivotal to all principals' development plans, perceptual changes, and behavioral changes was a new sense of shared mission against which decisions are measured to determine the contributions they will make or not make to the accomplishment that mission. Monitoring student progress through improved use of student achievement data was closely related to mission and the second most emphasized dimension of instructional leadership in terms of perceptual and behavioral changes.

Each protege described some type of major change in the relationship between the principal and the teachers. This change usually had to do with sharing the leadership function or with the principal becoming more involved in areas traditionally left to the individual discretion of classroom teachers, such as curriculum. Principals are using staff supervision as opportunities to ask questions about the ways in which classroom instruction are related to the school mission: "How are you doing on the school goals? How are you doing on the department goals? How are you doing on your goals?" (Protege 1A). All of the proteges described newly initiated efforts to become active partners with teachers and to lead teacher teams and committees in making decisions related to curriculum, instruction or school climate. Table III summarizes the ways in which proteges redefined their role as principal and provides examples of ways in which they changed behaviors.

How did mentors express their influence? Mentors influenced their principals through an eclectic mixture of five techniques: sharing, counseling, modeling, prodding, and supporting.

The technique of *sharing* involved telling stories about experiences in which the mentor or someone the mentor knew had been involved. These stories served as examples of ways

in which proteges might approach similar situations with which they were concerned. Sharing also involved general conversations about educational issues, problems, and challenges. Principals and their mentors felt this type of sharing conversation stimulated their creative problem solving processes and enhanced their awareness of the world of education beyond the doors of their schools. Representative remarks from proteges included:

> He would just kind of share with me some of his own experiences or how he proceeded with a plan that was not the same as mine. We seemed to have very similar leadership styles, so it was mostly through discussion and talking.
>
> I think learning is an important word because you both learn from each other, the sharing, sharing experiences.
>
> ...just being there with him and just listening to the fact that he has the same problems that I do, that he puts his pants on one leg at a time just like I do was also helpful...that he doesn't have all the answers, but together we can come up with a lot of good ideas. And, I think, that's the secret of the whole thing, I mean, providing some kind of partnerships, that we're not in this alone.
>
> Let's just say it made it a lot easier knowing somebody who had already tackled some problems... I think (mentor's name) was the first principal who was ever honest enough to say...,'Hey, you know, I've got problems.'
>
> We talked about general problems, things that you run into in education and how (mentor's name) worked with them and how I work with them...we just shared stuff back and forth.
>
> It's a two way street...we've shared a lot of ideas back and forth...Again, it's a networking situation.
>
> I think (mentor's name) influenced me more as a person who has the same problems that I do.
>
> Stories, absolutely, the storytelling is the best part of the whole thing.

TABLE III

PROTEGES' REDEFINITIONS OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP AND RELATED BEHAVIOR CHANGES

	Redefinition of the Principalship	Related Changes in Behavior
Protege 1B	Protege 1B sees one role of the principal as "working more with teachers in terms of what they're doing and more in terms of educational leadership..." Teachers should be included as part of the leadership team, but they, in turn, "have to be a lot more accountable in terms of pinpointing and specifying what it is we're going to work on."	"I'm visiting the classroom no less than I was before or no more, but I'm spending more time with them than I ever had before, individually, sitting down with them, having them tell me about themselves in terms of what they're doing. 'How are you doing on the department goals? How are you doing on the schools goals? How are you doing on the department goals? In other words, I've had some concrete things to lay in from of them and say, 'Well, here's the school goal and here's the department goal, and what are your goals? Okay, and then, let's talk about how you're working and what I can do to help you become better."
Protege 2B	According to Mentor 2A, protege 2B began redefining the principalship so that teachers received as much attention as the students; in the past, Protege 2B had done an excellent job of communicating with students, but ignored the needs of teachers to feed part of the mission or their needs for high expectations.	According to Mentor 2A, protege 2B began including teachers in decisions related to curriculum and staff development. Protege 2B began analyzing problems, developing strategies for solving them that involved other professionals in the building. Protege 2B began thinking in terms of cause and effect.
Protege 3B	"It made me feel more confident. I developed a lot of confidence in myself and what I was doing. I learned what things I needed to pay real close attention to and what things I could ignore...This is the first year I can absolutely say that everybody is going the same way...everybody works together...everybody shares ideas together ...They are professional people, they've gone through college...And I think that my role is simply to facilitate their training, facilitate whet they need in the classroom, and anything else that needs to be done, but it's not necessarily to be standing in their classroom writing their lesson plan for them and controlling them...And I gave told them that I would support them...whatever decisions they came up with...you can't make a wrong decision. I mean, if you do something that's not working, well, then we'll pack up and do something else.	Protege 3B described his unsuccessful efforts to change the behaviors of what he called part of the "Larry, Darryl and Darryl crew" of custodians. For the first time, teachers decided to test their collective problem-solving abilities and took on the task. "And, it finally came to a head, but when it came to a head I also had staff members that sat in on the meeting with me...we got the job done...they got a feeling of accomplishment from it." Since then, several teacher committees have been formed to work outside the regular school day on issues associated with curriculum, parental involvement and school organization.

TABLE III
(Con't)

PROTEGES' REDEFINITIONS OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP AND RELATED BEHAVIOR CHANGES

	Redefinition of the Principalship	Related Changes in Behavior
Protege 4B	"...I needed to work on...school climate... there's no doubt I do things differently...I was not communicating to the entire staff ..." 4B says that he entered the mentoring relationship with strong perceptions of the principal as an instructional leader, but felt frustrated by an inability to translate the concepts into actions. Consequently, he believes his definitions have changed less than have his skills, "I think my skills have gotten better...I would venture to say that if you stop five people right not today and ask them how they though the morale was in the building, they would tell you it is high... really good."	"I started what I called a `breakfast club.' I've got the staff divided into thirds and we pair them up by experience and departments so there's a cross section and on a volunteer basis every Friday I'm here at 7:30 ready with a coffee pot and rolls...No agenda, and we talk about what they want to talk about ...I seek out all the teachers. Spend a little time with them...literally give pats on the back...I write more positive notes. I single out people less in front of a group. I do it more privately." According to Mentor 4A, Protege 4B "listens more closely to his employees or people he's dealing with. And doesn't try to dominate the conversation. He doesn't put all his ideas onto the teachers."
Protege 5B	"I came into the administrative position knowing or thinking I knew what I wanted to do, and then you walk into it instructionally in the school. It gave me ...something higher than goals as far as a sense of purpose. That's the easiest thing that the principalship really is. It's building that sense of spirit in the school, and...the idea of what you want these children to identify with the school as being a purposeful part of their life, and it gave me the sense of responsibility to give them that. And, all the things I knew from counseling and you knew teaching, and knew from undergraduate school were kind of put in perspective.	"I have a clear picture of what I want to achieve...I think I've learned to focus more curriculum. I hadn't been two years ago. I knew it was there. I didn't know what to do about. I knew the kind of things that we traditionally do. We have curriculum studies and you have grade-level meetings to discuss what the curriculum is, but never really know how to get inside of it. And, that's what I'm trying to do...my first one (goal) is expand my knowledge-base in all areas of elementary education." Protege 5B describes several professional development trainings he attended as well as conversations he has had with individuals and groups of teachers regarding curriculum.

TABLE III
(Con't)

PROTEGES' REDEFINITIONS OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP AND RELATED BEHAVIOR CHANGES

	Redefinition of the Principalship	Related Changes in Behavior
Protege 5C	"It made me feel more professional...I felt this is really a professional responsibility. Education...really...has a lot of merit and value as a profession. And certainly isn't less than being a doctor or a lawyer or anything else...I mean, I've always loved being in education, but it made me feel elevated in terms of the way I perceived my role as well as I thing...I was able to share that with the staff and the community that we really are extremely important doing a real good job here." These remarks regarding a redefinition of the principalship as a profession are important in light of Mentor 5 A's remarks regarding Protege 5C, "Well, I think the thing was...a lack of self-confidence...she's more confident now. She is willing to tackle something...She's the person who can get that job done as well as anybody else...I could see it so clearly.	"We just had a myriad of activities in terms of student self-esteem. We had programs like "Kid of the Month Lunch" where every month I would have lunch and have candle light and flowers and table cloths and one child from every classroom would eat lunch at a kind of like a captain's table thing and I would serve them pizza and sundaes and we just made a real big deal out of that. And, I'd...put their name in the monthly news letter and I made a certificate for each of them on the computer...And, we had a "Brag Bunch." And brags were for being responsible and good...and it worked. We had a "I'm so proud door"...and a child could come to the office and they could call any adult they wanted...I would get on the phone and congratulate the parent...We had an academic Hall of Fame..." The entire staff was heavily involved in a school improvement plan.
Protege 6B	I've always felt that the principal was an add-on, an impossible task...I didn't feel the training was appropriate. The training I had in (Name of a State) was old, really useless...It's a new day. The things that were expected then were not true anymore, and different things are going on. I'm just now beginning to see the business of being a principal as something legitimate on its own, self-standing, necessary, and I never in my life felt it was a privilege or an opportunity as I do now.	"I'm available. That I have tools, some things to share. I believed for years they (the faculty) thought they knew it better than I. And, I couldn't refute that. They were following along in their own little niche. There's more coordination now. There's more linkage between teachers, between teachers and kids, between school and home...Now every time I go to a classroom, I believe that I see things or I can suggest things and that's the trick...I can get it across to the teacher so they're not threatened...but now I see more things that need addressing." Protege 6B offered several examples of working with teacher teams to revise the curriculum and of working with the staff and board to establish and articulate a community mission for the school.

The technique of *counseling* overlapped the type of sharing which occurred when the mentor told a story. In counseling, the mentor used the story not necessarily as an example of the way in which a principal should handle a situation, but to illustrate both exemplary behaviors and potential pitfalls. When counseling, mentors encouraged principals to talk as much as possible while the mentors served as sounding boards and provided reality checks. As counselors, the mentors tried to guide the principals to discovering their own solutions to problems. One of the mentors described this as "active listening." Another described this as "nondirective counseling."

Mentors reported making conscious use of counseling techniques:

> (Name of Protege) needed someone to ask the `why's' and to get (Name of Protege) to do the analyzing.
>
> Another reaction may be an anecdote that will say, `I know a school once that was approaching that, and the principal took this tact. I don't know if that may be of any use for you or not, but here's the circumstance and this is the way he went about it.' I'll do that fairly frequently because I have a long back log of that kind of thing...there are few problems that haven't been faced somewhere...and/or `You know, there can be a pitfall in that. I've seen pitfalls occur in that arena. You may want to think about that before you get too far into that as to how you're gonna avoid that.'
>
> Like most good counselors, I want him to talk as much as possible. I need to be, in my opinion, a good listener...As he expresses areas of frustration...that he perceives need for growth, I will try to make sure I'm understanding what he's saying...again, like a counselor relationship, and then will respond in one of two or three ways.
>
> (Name of Protege) was able to do this thinking and talking to someone who tried to find what the best way for (Name of Protege) to function would be. But, also, from the point of view that the mentor really tried to get the individual to come up with the solutions and the problems...I think it really helped the individual to think things out.

I've learned to...spend a little bet more time in breaking the ice, to see if there can be a personal relationship...or relaxation...they have to have some trust and so I've just built a little bit more time in there for that trust factor to occur. And, you do that by babbling, just shooting the breeze, just taking some time to walk me around your school.

Proteges also painted the mentor in the role of counselor:

(A school board member) was operating unprofessionally as a board member. She was new and green. She wanted to be an administrator. She was very vocal. And not professional. And I was (stuttering and shrugging)...(Name of mentor) gave me some real good advice. That may have been the best advice I've ever been given. (Name of mentor) told me to stay in close contact with her, not get away from her. Force her to understand your position, keep her busy on positive things. And, I'm not going to tell you I've not had problems since then, but that certainly has helped a lot.

As a counselor he would get me to produce to his active listening.

That's what (Name of mentor) gave me...is the awareness...input from him...that there are ways to do this, not telling me I should, but just, `There are ways, there are good ways to do this that make it simple so you won't have to kill yourself doing it.' ...(Name of mentor) has kept me from falling all over my feet and hurting people and trying to force things on teachers.

The technique of *modeling* was less an intentional technique employed by mentors than a natural consequence of their being perceived by their proteges as exemplary administrators. Proteges asked mentors about their experiences, which mentors were, for the most part, flattered to share. Six of the seven principals openly admired the leadership skills of their mentors and expressed desires to be more like their mentors. Principals selectively adopted aspects of their mentors' leadership styles and behaviors. For example, one principal modeled a new information management system after that used by his mentor. Another principal strived to adopt his mentor's appearance of patience and ability to genuinely listen and respond to the concerns and ideas of teachers.

(Mentor's name) brought experience...as a principal. (Mentor's name) had been there before...We talked about staff relations quite a bit, and how (Mentor's name) handled things, and I picked up a few hints there.

...of course, (Mentor's name) has been there a long time before..it's a wonder he's landed on his feet as many times as he has. But, anyway...that's why he's been there as long as he has...pulling it off.

...if I was going to do something that I had some questions about, introduce something strong to the district, and I was getting mixed reactions from my teachers, and I wasn't ready to make an administrative decision based on my own prior experience, and he was the person I could talk to. That he had a lot of prior experience that I felt was sound. And he had the courage to make decisions at times. I remember...this may seem insignificant, but he eliminated afternoon recess. But when you talk about teachers who enjoyed their release time, that was a big move. And, he did it in a way that there was very little static about it from the teachers. He just was able to pull those things off, and I felt that getting his input on my doing something that would be a drastic administrative change could help me to do it in a way that would make the change easier for the teachers.

I think he had some things in mind as to the things that he thought I should see and pointed them out, you know...we had discussions all along about...what we should be doing and the kinds of things that he's doing in his building...and I said, `Well, I wish I could pull off what you're doing.' And...the one thing, you know...it doesn't look like I'm very organized...but he says, `Well, there's some things you probably could do.' He gave me those little books you know (refers to a row of 3-ring binders on shelf behind desk, which are similar to a set on a shelf in the mentor's office). I use those...I gotta file for team leaders, I gotta file for this and a file for that, and they're all right there at ready access, and I really didn't have a system for keeping track of things.

The technique of *prodding* involved monitoring principals' progress toward accomplishment of their development plans. Prodding did not cross the line into supervising or behaving like a parent. Rather, the mentors served more as the materialization of professional conscience.

> So the mentoring part is just to see if they start to slip, why are they starting to slip...`Well, I just haven't had the time.' Okay, I can understand that, but we've got something we have to reach here at the end and you made a personal commitment, and so you need to stay on track with it...So, it's just a little touching, a little pushing, and so if a person needed a total cosmetic surgery, then you'd be a lot more involved in the mentoring, but as I said, all my people have been very strong people, and there again, is where the mentor is critical in sensing how much interference, how much involvement occurs, then, during the mentoring.

Through prodding, mentors reminded principals that they had a right to the time, resources, and attention their own professional development required. Through prodding, mentors communicated to principals that improving themselves was a way of helping others who depended on them. Prodding activities included: reminding principals of timelines, reminding principals of intentions, contacting principals on a regular basis, setting goals to be accomplished between meetings, meeting principals outside the school setting, and chiding or teasing principals about incomplete tasks. Some mentors and their principals met at a regularly scheduled time and place. Others scheduled the next meeting at the end of each session.

> Every time we visit, he is enthusiastic about what's happened since the last time we met. And much of our time is talking about what has been achieved, at least the first half of it, before we talk about what's going to be happening in the immediate future. I have also viewed in him these meetings sort of push him to pause and say, `Now, what has it we have gotten done and what is it we're going to be working on?' It's sort of like the beginnings of the evaluation cycle in which we used to say, `Yes, we do evaluation conferences.' We never ever do it unless we sit down and say, `Hey, we're going to talk about it.' And this has the same effect. `Hey, we're going to talk about it--what we've achieved and where we're going.'

Four of the mentors mentioned taking extra care to notice journal articles relevant to their principals' interest and sending them a copy.

> Each month they'll receive some kind of contact. I've used a lot of techniques in that I do quite a bit of writing and I might send them something that I've used that they might want to use for one of their newsletters. That type of thing. Again, now they wouldn't associate with anything except something that I was sharing with them.

Three of the mentors make phone calls to principals between meetings. Two mentors described making special efforts to make note of regional and state meetings principals mentioned planning to attend and scheduling themselves to be there.

> Because what would happen would be I would know that they were going to be some place and something they'd told me, well, I would write it down. And then, if I were going to be a that same meeting, then I would say, `Well, why don't we go out to lunch together?' So, in their minds they wouldn't equate that with the program, you see...And, sometimes I went to things I wouldn't have gone to otherwise because it's so hard to access their lives otherwise. And...if you catch them away from their school when they're going to something, having lunch with them or coffee in the morning before or catching them after. They're much more focused at that time than they are if they're worried about getting back to their classrooms.

These mentors also occasionally suggested that they and their principals travel to meetings together.

> Some of the proteges recognized the mentors as playing a role in keeping them on task.

> It was structuring it for me. It was just...getting it down and giving me a focus-1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And that doesn't sound very exciting, I know. I could tell you a whole lot of neat stories about people devised all these things. I just need to focus and structure it and (Mentor's name) helped me do that.

> I think those are the kind of things I think that I would expect from a mentor, you know, be able to say some things in a kidding way and in a way just kind of pricking your way to get moving along a little bit.

> Well, I'm a procrastinator, and I better get moving. My sixth year program was really driving on and on, and (Mentor's name)...chided me a little bit. I mean, how much did it take to get moving on that?
>
> Not just me, but the entire school. (remark in response to follow-up question relating to the mentor's role in helping develop focus.)

The technique of *supporting* is the most subtle of the techniques. Supportive behaviors are most often characterized by works of assurance. Despite their sometimes lengthy experience as principals, proteges were unsure of the appropriateness of the changes they were initiating in their schools. They needed reassurance that their behaviors were justifiable and reasonable. Related to providing reassurance are expressions of confidence and offerings of positive feedback. Other ways in which mentors expressed support included being flexible and responsive to principals' timelines regarding the scheduling of meetings and responding promptly to requests for resources. Principals identified active listening as a supportive behavior. Support was occasionally expressed by following up on meetings with copies of relevant journal articles or human resources.

Principals also appreciated mentors being available during times of crisis. In one case, a principal called his mentor because a conflict with the new district superintendent had made him so angry that he was ready to resign, despite having no other prospects. His mentor postponed everything on his agenda to drive 60 miles and provide support to the principal as he worked through alternative ways of dealing with the situation. Interestingly, although the principals saw this as a major imposition to the mentor, the mentor saw the incident as a part of the responsibility he assumed when he was assigned a protege.

Would principals have changed without mentors? Mentors were necessary for changes in principals' perceptions and behaviors. All of the principals completed their development plans. Six of the seven principals believe little or none of their development plans would have been implemented if they had not been provided a mentor during the implementation year. Principals believe their mentors influenced the manner in which they implemented their plans. Mentors provided focus to the plans and kept principals directed toward completion of the plans. Mentors helped principals make links between their knowledge of instructional leadership and the ways in which it could be translated into meaningful behaviors. Mentors also served as filters through which principals refined their

perceptions about school leadership and ways in which they could be effective school leaders. the seventh principal reported completing the development plan prior to being assigned a mentor. In this case, the mentor-principal relationship struggled to find a focus and was less satisfactory to the participants.

What were the unanticipated outcomes of working with a mentor? Mentors' influences on their proteges extended beyond implementation of the development plan. For five of the seven principals, working with a mentor resulted in a sense of professional renewal. Four principals who had considered seeking new positions as a way of "starting over" decided that they were capable of making significant contributions to the schools in which they currently served as principals. One principal, who was on the verge of retiring early due to frustration and feelings of ineffectiveness, discovered ways in which he could be effective and has set his sights on accomplishing major changes in his school by his normal retirement date. One principal's newfound confidence resulted in seeking and obtaining a promotion. As one mentor commented, "These are life decisions these administrators are making." Another said,

> I think the people that I had working with me were also in change of life mentalities. They had been in their positions for a while...and they were doing a re-evaluation...they volunteered..not so much for the school's purpose, but for their own personal purpose...my guess is maybe 70% themselves and 30% school.

One mentor summarized the renewal experienced by the four proteges with whom he had worked (only one of whom was a subject in this study),

> I would see it (mentoring) of being greater value to the people that, like I've been dealing with, who have been at it 15 years, 20 years, who are at a frustration level, mid-life crisis...see themselves as (at a) dead end, because what they find out as they go through the (mentoring) process is that they're not in a dead end...that there are a lot of things that they have to offer, regardless of their capabilities.

Mentors, too, experienced feelings of renewal. Some learned new strategies either directly from their principals or as a result of helping their principals solve problems. Other mentors found that working with their principals caused them to consciously reflect on their own leadership styles, strategies, and effectiveness.

> The by-product form this is what it does for me. That's something I didn't anticipate, but each time I go through a process with a client, I literally go through it with them as (Mentor's name). I don't to their questions. I don't top their queries. I share some things, but as I drive away, I do a lot of comparison. It has helped me to stay firm in some of the professional decisions I have made. It has allowed me to clarify some gray thinking in my own mind, so I essentially am analyzing myself as I go away from these people because they are all giving me different perspectives...I anticipated a pure statement of objectivity, but I think if you keep that posture, I think that's tremendous erosion of the spirit...But, if you're able to be personal, then, I think it becomes a very valued experience for the client and for you as well...I've gotten much more involved mentally and emotionally...for myself than I would have ever anticipated.

The mentor-protege relationships decreased feelings of isolation for both mentors and principals. Mentors and principals perceive the principalship as a lonely position. According to study participants, principals cannot confide in the teachers whom they are supposed to supervise, motivate, and lead. They cannot express weakness to their assistant principals who look to them as role models. Principals must be careful about the ways in which they share problems with their superintendents, who are also their evaluators. Principals in multi-building districts felt that exposing weaknesses to fellow principals in their districts left them vulnerable when competing for advanced positions or limited resources within their districts. Principals must even be cautious about being open with neighbors and friends in the community because of fear that something they say will be misunderstood or shared with others. The mentoring relationship provided both the study principals and their mentors with confidants outside their communities. Beyond reducing isolation, the mentoring relationships also resulted in expanded informal networks. Mentors and principals shared names of contact people and introduced each other to new colleagues. In one case, a mentor and principal introduced their assistant principals to solve a mutual problem. In another case, a mentor benefited from this networking in two ways. First, he was introduced to someone who would become his own informal mentor. Second, he was made aware of an outstanding female candidate who filled the vacant position of high school principal in his district. Mentors and their principals keep in touch with each other even after completion of the development plan. These extended relationships are described as "friendships" or "collegial relationships." Principals and mentors both reported they would not hesitate to call on the other as a casual friend, in time or need, or for a reference.

Conclusions

Project mentoring may provide an effective means of professional growth for mid-career principals. Project mentors appear to affect the ways in which principals perceive themselves and their abilities to provide their schools with instructional leadership. Changes in perceptions appear to lead to changes in behaviors.

Principals Respond to Personalized Mid-Career Renewal. Principals are prime candidates for midcareer crises and efforts to inspire mid-career renewal. Because of limited opportunities for advancement, responsibilities which prevent returning to living on a teacher's salary, and the difficulty of marketing oneself to the private sector, principals tend to stay principals for 20 or more years (Krupp, 1983). In addition, most principals believe in the value of education and genuinely want to do a good job in their chosen field. The principalship is a lonely position compounded by the ambiguity of trying to serve multiple constituencies (Krupp, 1983), some of whom may have one been the principal's teaching colleagues. If we believe the research which identifies effective principals as critical to effective schools, it is important that we identify ways in which to help principals grow within their current positions.

Midcareer principals in this study do not view returning to advanced university coursework as a source of reinvigoration. Rather, they agree with Bridges (1977) that such coursework is restrictive and nonresponsive to their immediate individual professional crises. At the midcareer stage, many echo Murphy and Hallinger's (1987) observation that their certification programs did not prepare them for the pressurized role in which they found themselves. They need coping tools and problems solving strategies. They need ways in which to acquire new skills and information. They are bright people who may leave the profession on retire while retaining their positions unless they find a source of renewal.

Principal development should be an individualized process that emphasizes issues of identity and adaptivity. Principal renewal involves at least partially undoing earlier training by correcting overspecialization, reducing burnout, and introducing more self-direction to the work situation. The principals involved in the study had advanced degrees, certification, and experience in group trainings provided by the Illinois Administrators' Academy and other organizations. Advanced education and training armed them with knowledge and strategies. The effects, however, were mixed.

Sometimes, the principals were able to apply what they had learned. Other times, they postponed implementing what they had learned or felt inadequate to do so. The principals involved in this study are motivated to do well and were all invested in school improvement prior to involvement with the mentor program. These principals reported not seeing themselves as making significant changes in their perceptions of the principalship, their perceptions of their abilities to act as instructional leaders, or their observable behaviors until committing to a process of leadership analysis, design of an individualized development plan, and implementation of the plan over a one year period with the support of a project mentor. It is clear that these changes would not have occurred in the absence of a project mentor. The affects of mentoring appear to have gone well beyond the original intent of assisting in the implementation of development plans to professional renewal of both principals and their mentors.

Mentoring is an interpersonal relationship based on mutual respect and trust. When asked to describe their relationships, both mentors and principals most frequently used the words "trust" and "respect." In cases in which the principals selected mentors whom they knew from prior experiences, the respect was instantaneous. When principals had no prior experience with their mentors, but knew of their mentors' reputations as exemplary educators, respect was present but distant. The mentor had to prove worthiness as a confidant. In no cases did the mentor disappoint the principal who selected the mentor based on personal experiences or professional reputation. Gender and age did not seem to be a factor in principals' selections of mentors. Principals shared with their mentors, emotions, problems, and opinions they had previously shared with no other colleagues. In turn, mentors guided and reassured principals through self-disclosure of sensitive, and even confidential, situations in which they had been involved. Mentors shared opinions in ways they never had before.

Every principal in the study changed to some degree form directive to shared decision-making styles of leadership. Their failure to do so prior to working with a mentor was not because they were unwilling to share with teachers, but because they did not know how. This seems to indicate that principals are sorely lacking in useful preservice or inservice exposure to how to work with and through groups. In that same vein, principals seem to have a lot of knowledge about a lot of educational theories and practices, but lack the means of implementing their knowledge. It would seem wise to find ways to infuse practical "how to's" into preservice education and to provide support to new administrators once they begin working. In addition, finding ways to develop

administrative networks and individualized career-long support would enable the field to continually renew its members.

Planned project mentoring can have an important role in the professional growth and renewal of principals. However, it must be implemented with care. The successful planned mentoring relationships in this study had five reasons to exist. First, the principals wanted to improve the ways in which they operationalized one or more dimensions of instructional leadership in their schools. They volunteered to participate and actively sought admission to the program. Second, principals wanted to implement their development plans with the assistance of mentors. Principals respected and trusted their mentors. Being allowed to select their mentors from a list of those trained to serve in this capacity enhanced the likelihood that the relationships would be successful. Third, the relationships had a focus. Each principal's professional development plan provided a focus for discussion and neutral ground over which to get to know each other. Fourth, mentoring occurred within the context of the school. Because mentors infiltrated the principal's daily routine, principals did not have to leave their responsibilities in order to receive training and information. Fifth, once a level of trust developed, the relationship ceased to emphasize the development plan and shifted to a mutually satisfying collegial relationship which extended to a potentially life-long friendship.

The midcareer crisis problem of the principalship has been overlooked both by the profession and by those from outside education who seek to reform it. Principal's complaints have been dismissed as excuses for poor school performance. Those who seek to reform education would be wise to pay attention to the human component of the school improvement formula and invest in the professionals who affect children's lives. Investments should be made in project mentoring or other types of long term professional development which hold promise for changing perceptions and related behaviors. The final measure of effective schools is student achievement. Relationships between long-term professional development of the principal and other adults in the school and changes in student achievement deserve to be studied.

School administrators are well educated professionals who have a genuine desire to help others. Unfortunately, the role of constantly being a helper is draining. Unless the helper is helped, many bright individuals will either leave school administration, particularly at the building level, or will cease to function effectively. Mid-career mentoring of principals is one means of preserving talented leadership in our schools.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions have been included to insure consistency in the interpretation of background information, methodology and findings of the study.

Administrator Development or Professional Development: Programs designed to change and improve the performance of principals and others responsible for the daily operation of schools.

Development Plan: An individualized plan for changing the performance of a principal who has undergone assessment as part of the Illinois State Board of Education Administrator's Academy.

Instructional Leadership: Responsibilities associated with the principalship described through 5 dimensions: defines mission, manages curriculum, supervises teaching, monitors student progress, and promotes instructional climate (Monograph #1).

Leadership Analyst: Practicing or retired superintendent, central office staff member, principal, or university professor trained by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide services associated with analysis of individual assessment data, on-site observation, and design of an individualized development plan.

Mentor: An experienced person who facilitates the growth of another through one or more formative stages (Krug, 1988).

Mentoring: The establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional development.

Practicing Principal: Any person who is serving as the principal of an Illinois school and is designated as "Elementary principal," "Middle School Principal," "Junior High School Principal," or "High School Principal" by the employing school district.

Project Mentoring: Mentor-principal relationship established for the purpose of completing a specific project within a prescribed period of time (Gray, 1988).

Protege: An individual working with a mentor, formally or informally, for the purpose of personal, career, or professional development.

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